

ideas to Freshen Up The Home Front

James Wright, CPBD, AIBD
Residential Designed Solutions, Inc.

Find the right ideas to fit your budget and home.

With the thought of spring just around the corner, you may be considering what you can do to add more character and pizzazz to the front of your home. Of course, what you are able to do depends upon your budget, as a complete face lift is much more expensive than just freshening the entry. The following tips were gathered with all kinds of budgets in mind, and all of them will have your house looking spiffed up in no time.

Getting Started

First, let's cover the basic clean up items that can be achieved with just a little effort and minimal cost:

- Clean windows and gutters.
- Pressure wash walks to remove mold & mildew.
- Edge sidewalks and remove vegetation growing between concrete or bricks.
- Get your lawn looking great, fertilize, de-thatch, get rid of weeds, reseed etc.
- Trim trees and shrubs so they don't look overgrown and make certain you can see the front door from the street.
- Planting some colorful annuals and ground-cover around trees looks great.
- Garage your cars. Many of us turn our garages into storage rooms and park our cars in the driveway where they can clutter the view of the house. If this is the case with your household, maybe it's time to pare down the paraphernalia to make room for the cars.

Next Level - Fresh Coat

Painting, the next level of spruce up can be done by most home owners:

- Fresh paint for siding and/or trim – a bolder color will make a huge difference in appearance.
- Don't forget the shutters. Semi-gloss paint in a complimentary color adds sparkle to your home.
- Refinish or repaint the front door and add new or refinished hardware. Nothing looks worse than a weathered and stained brass kick plate.
- Repaint or replace your mailbox if needed as it's usually the first thing your guests see.

Nighttime Appearance

Don't forget about how your house looks at night; add lighting for evening appeal. Again much of this you can do yourself and is available through your local home center. However, if you're not comfortable working with electrical wiring, hire a licensed electrician to do it for you. It's not worth the risk.

- Add low voltage lighting along your sidewalk to the front door to light the way for your guests. Many types of decorative fixtures are available to enhance the walkway.
- Add up-lighting to illuminate trees, corners of the house or important landscaping elements.
- Add a decorative post lamp or replace that worn out light fixture on your front porch. Match your existing fixtures as closely as possible so they look cohesive.



Architectural Enhancements

There are many things that you can do architecturally to enhance the image of your home, some are simple and relatively inexpensive while others are substantial and require a larger budget.

- Add flower boxes to your windows. Many different styles are available online or through your local home center. You may also want to consider adding a drip irrigation system to keep the flowers blooming and conserve water.
- If you have a front porch, make it inviting by adding a planter for extra color or chairs or rockers if you have a large enough area.
- If you don't have a porch, consider adding one – nothing says "home" like a covered entry. You will want to check on your local zoning to see if you have the room to add one.
- Adding additional trim such as crown molding or porch railings increases the level of exterior detail which adds to the curb appeal.
- No shutters? Consider adding them if the style permits. They should be equal to half the width of the window and they are offered in many styles and materials. The most common styles are raised panel or louvered, but plank and cutout are available too. Shutters add a nice accent color to the front of the house.
- Create visual interest with front-yard gardens, fences, stone walls, arbors or water features.
- Sometimes changing cladding materials can upgrade the look of your home. If you have an all vinyl sided home, adding some stucco, stone or even some vertical Board & Batten siding can significantly upgrade your homes appearance.



From inexpensive to substantial in cost, elements add visual interest to your home and increases its curb appeal.

More substantial renovations will be specific to the design and style of your home. It's possible to add roof dormers and cupolas and to even change roof lines completely in the process of remodeling or adding on to your home.

Now is the time to get started. Decide what you want to tackle first to realize the new look you want for your home this spring!